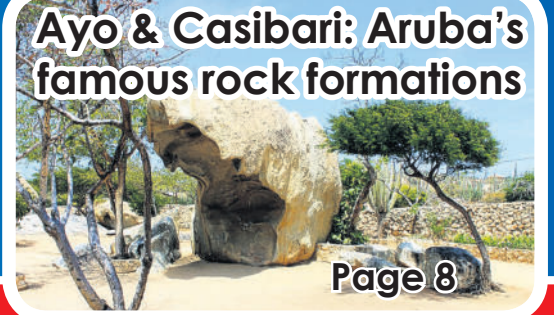




The history and meaning of the Aruban florin



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Lost film of French cinema pioneer retrieved from U.S. attic

Culpeper, United States

The battered wooden trunk had been in the family for a century shifted from attic to barn to garage as it was handed down through the generations. No one knew a cinematic treasure was inside.

That was until retired high school teacher Bill McFarland's curiosity got the better of him.

For the past 20 years, McFarland, 76, had been the keeper of the trunk, which originally belonged to his late great-grandfather who showed silent movies to audiences in rural Pennsylvania at the turn of the 20th century.

"It was just this trunk of films that seemed too good to throw away. But I had no idea what they were or how to show them," McFarland told AFP.

He offered them to museums and even tried to sell them through an antique store, whose owner soon told him to take them away after learning vintage nitrate film reels were highly combustible and could explode.

Then last summer, McFarland drove from his home in the northern state of Michigan to the US Library of Congress' National Audio-Visual Conservation Center in Culpeper in the southern state of Virginia.

He was in for a surprise a pleasant one.

- Pioneering short film -

Spliced in the middle of one of the 10 reels was a lost short film by Georges Melies, a French cinema pioneer the first to experiment with fictional narratives and special effects at the very dawn of moving pictures. The 45-second film, "Gugusse and the Automaton,"



Bill McFarland holds his great-grandfather William DeLyle Frisbee's magic lantern slide projector at his home in Jenison, Michigan, on March 31, 2026.

ton," was made in 1897 just two years after the Lumiere Brothers staged the world's first public screening of a movie in Paris.

Melies, a theatrical showman and magician, attended that screening and was inspired to make films of his own. He is most famous for "A Trip to the Moon" (1902) with its iconic scene of a rocket landing in the eye of the man in the Moon.

By a decade later, his filmmaking had fallen out of vogue as the center of the movie world shifted from Europe to America.

Melies ended up as a toy seller in Paris' Gare Montparnasse train station a story that was dramatized in Martin Scorsese's 2011 film, "Hugo." But his legacy endured.

"He was one of the first filmmakers," said George Willeman, leader of the congressional library's nitrate

film vault, who said the recovered reel was likely a third-generation copy of the Melies original. "And one of the first to experience film piracy."

- Copy's miraculous survival -

In retrospect, piracy was a salvation for film historians as it means that Melies' work lives on.

Reputedly, he destroyed hundreds of his own negatives, and the celluloid was melted down and some of it used as raw material to make soldiers' boots during World War I.

While "Gugusse and the Automaton" was known to be in Melies' back catalogue, no one had seen it until McFarland delivered it to the library in his Toyota sedan last September.

It features a magician played by Melies cranking up an automaton that grows in size and then

beats the magician on the head with a stick. The magician retaliates by bashing the automaton with a sledgehammer until it disappears, shrinking through a surprisingly slick series of jump cuts.

"These single frame cuts are really precise for a movie this old, and the gags are timeless," said Jason Evans Groth, curator of the library's moving image section, who recounted McFarland popping the trunk of his car with the film reels inside when he arrived in Culpeper.

The film's discovery has taken McFarland on another journey learning about the life of his great-grandfather William DeLyle Frisbee.

- 'Ticking time bomb' -

Born in 1860 in the rural northwest of Pennsylvania, Frisbee was a stocky, mustached man with many strings to his bow.

He grew potatoes, kept bees, made maple syrup and taught school three months each year. In his downtime he would travel by horse and buggy across Pennsylvania and neighboring states with what he called his "exhibition": a new-fangled Edison phonograph, a magic lantern slide projector and later on, movies.

Well-thumbed pocket diaries describe Frisbee's travels. "Gave the exhibition at Garland, \$5 receipts, rough crowd," reads one entry, referring to a community in northwestern Pennsylvania. "I can only imagine Saturday night, they might have been liquored up a little bit," observed McFarland. "I wonder if there were disappointed customers, or if they were just rowdy? Maybe they were excited at seeing these pictures."

A century on, and the archivists at the Library of Congress were excited too. An alarmed McFarland watched specialists whisk the precious reels to a refrigerated vault, already home to tens of thousands of films from the golden age of Hollywood -- and specially designed to prevent a nitrate-fueled fire.

"It finally really registered that I had been...carrying a ticking time bomb," McFarland said.

Library film preservation specialists spent a week restoring the film reel frame-by-frame and digitizing it. The reel was shrunken through age and frayed, but otherwise in remarkable condition for something stashed in sun-heated attics for years.

It's now a piece of cinema history, viewable on the library's website. □

Landmark court ruling shields Tongass National Forest from logging

In a monumental victory for conservationists, Indigenous tribes, and climate activists, the vast and rugged expanse of the Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska has been secured against large-scale industrial logging. A recent federal court ruling has upheld critical protections for the nation's largest national forest, often referred to as "America's Amazon," ensuring that its ancient old-growth trees remains standing for generations to come.

The decision marks the latest chapter in a decades-long tug-of-war over the 16.7-million-acre temperate rainforest. The court's ruling effectively reinstates and reinforces the "Roadless Rule," a federal regulation that prohibits timber harvesting and road construction within designated wild areas. For the Tongass, this means that millions of acres of Sitka spruce, western hemlock, and red cedar some of which have stood for nearly a millennium are now off-limits to the chainsaw.



A sanctuary for biodiversity

The Tongass is not merely a collection of trees; it is a biological powerhouse. It represents one of the last relatively intact temperate rainforests on Earth. The court noted that the ecological value of the forest far outweighs the short-term economic gain of timber exports.

The forest serves as a vital sanctuary for a spectacular array of wildlife. It is home to the world's highest density of brown bears and bald eagles. Its cold, nutrient-rich streams provide the spawning grounds for all five species of Pacific salmon, which in turn support a billion-thousand-dollar commercial and recreational fishing industry. By protecting the forest canopy, the court has essentially protected the entire watershed that sustains the regional economy and ecosystem.

The "lungs" of North America
Beyond its local beauty, the Tongass plays a disproportionate role in the global fight against climate change. Because of its massive size and the age of its trees, the Tongass acts as a "carbon sink," absorbing and storing more atmospheric carbon than almost any other forest on the planet.

The "lungs" of North America

Scientists estimate that the Tongass alone holds about 8% of the total carbon stored in all U.S. national forests combined. "Protecting the Tongass is one of the most cost-effective climate strategies we have," said Dr. Sarah Vance, an ecologist who testified during the proceedings. "You cannot simply replant a thousand-year-old ecosystem. Once that carbon is released through logging, it's gone. This ruling keeps that carbon in the ground and in the trees where it belongs."

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A victory for indigenous sovereignty

Perhaps the most emotional reactions to the ruling came from the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples, who have inhabited the Southeast Alaska panhandle for over 10,000 years. For these Indigenous communities, the Tongass is not "timber land" it is a spiritual home, a pharmacy, and a pantry.

"Our identity is woven into the cedar and the salmon," said Joel Jackson, President of the Organized Village of Kake. "For too long, decisions about our ancestral lands were made by people in offices thousands of miles away. This ruling acknowledges that our traditional way of life depends on a healthy, standing forest. It is a win for our ancestors and our grandchildren." □

Ancient Native American dice games spark a modern cultural renaissance

In the quiet community halls of the Cherokee Nation and the vibrant cultural centers of the Pacific Northwest, a rhythmic sound is echoing the clatter of plum pits and the soft thud of willow sticks against woven baskets. This isn't just the sound of a game; it is the sound of a cultural reclamation. Across the United States, Native American communities are reviving the ancient art of traditional dice making, turning a prehistoric pastime into a modern tool for education, healing, and tribal pride.

For centuries, hundreds of Indigenous nations from the Lakota of the Great Plains to the Hopi of the Southwest played sophisticated games of chance and skill. Long before the arrival of the six-sided

plastic cube, Indigenous "dice" were masterpieces of natural engineering. Artisans crafted them from locally sourced materials: bison ribs, walnut shells, peach stones, and carved deer bone. Typically two-sided, these pieces were etched with intricate symbols representing clans, constellations, or the four directions, then smoothed to a high polish with animal fat and patience.

More than a game

The revival of these games, such as the "Basket Game" or "Hand Game," is being hailed by tribal leaders as "good medicine." In many communities, the process of making the dice is just as important as the play itself. Elders are leading workshops to teach youth how to harvest willow during the correct moon phase

and how to use traditional dyes made from berries and minerals to color the wood.

"When a young person sits down to carve a set of plum pit dice, they aren't just making a toy," says Michael Running Bear, a cultural educator. "They are connecting with the materials of their ancestors. They are learning the patience of the craft and the stories that go along with each symbol. It builds a bridge between generations that was nearly broken."

The mathematics of tradition

Beyond cultural preservation, these traditional games are making a surprise appearance in modern classrooms. Educators are using Native American dice to teach complex

concepts of probability and statistics. Because most traditional dice are two-sided (with a "decorated" and "plain" side), they provide a perfect real-world model for binary

probability.

Students who might struggle with abstract algebra often find clarity in the "counting sticks" used to track scores in a game of "Stick Dice." □



Native American dice as old as 13,000 years – Courtesy of Smithsonian Institution, American Museum of Natural History and Wyoming University (SWNS)

CinemaCon starts with box office optimism



American actors Chris Meledandri, Jack Black, Benny Safdie, Donald Glover, Chris Pratt, Anya Taylor Joy, Charlie Day, Keegan-Michael Key, Brie Larson and Shigeru Miyamoto attend the world premiere of 'The Super Mario Galaxy Movie' at Minamiza Theater in Kyoto on March 28, 2026.

Las Vegas, United States

Movie theater owners huddled in Las Vegas on Monday for their annual meeting, buoyed by optimism over the year's strong start at the box office.

CinemaCon, where film studios bring in their stars and offer a sneak peek at their upcoming slate, will serve as a stage to celebrate a 23-percent jump in takings year-on-year, in the industry's best first-quarter per-

formance since before the pandemic.

But it will also provide an opportunity to reflect on how to sustain the momentum in a year that could bring significant changes — such as the expected takeover of legendary studio Warner Bros. Discovery by Paramount Skysdance.

"When you have consolidation of legacy studios, as we learned with Disney and Fox,

the amount of movies produced goes down, prices go up, and we think that is bad for theaters," Michael O'Leary, CEO of Cinema United, which organizes the gathering, told AFP last week.

The trade group has voiced its concerns to US and international regulators, urging them to scrutinize the expected merger closely.

"We continue to oppose this transaction (and) encourage them to look closely at this merger, because the consequences of it are serious," he said.

- Demographic Shifts -

CinemaCon is set to draw a constellation of stars to the Colosseum Theater at Caesars Palace.

This year, attendees can expect appearances from Zendaya, Matt Damon, Tom Holland, Timothee Chalamet, and Tom Cruise, as well as acclaimed director Christopher Nolan, who is behind the epic "The Odyssey" slat-

ed for release in July.

Presentations by the traditional studios kick off on Monday, when Sony will reveal what it has in store for 2026.

CinemaCon, which runs until Thursday, will also serve as a forum to discuss some of the structural changes in movie-going habits that are affecting the industry.

These include the shifts in audience habits engendered by the pandemic and the explosion of streaming, which has seen viewers choosing to stay on the couch.

But they also include a surge in cinema-going by Gen Z, apparently attracted by the "authenticity" of the experience.

A decade ago, filmgoers in the United States and Canada would frequently spend more than \$11 billion annually at the cinema, but since the pandemic, the total take has not exceeded \$9 billion.

This year's string of big releas-

es has sparked hopes that there could be a return to such lofty numbers.

The opening weekend for Amazon MGM's "Project Hail Mary" logged a healthy \$81 million, and was followed up by "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie" with \$131 million.

Upcoming releases expected to do well include Michael Jackson biopic "Michael," "The Devil Wears Prada 2," "Star Wars: The Mandalorian and Grogu," "Spider-Man: Brand New Day," "The Odyssey," and the third installment in the epic "Dune" series.

CinemaCon will also present awards for big-screen achievements to a diverse group of stars, including actor LaKeith Stanfield ("Atlanta"), rapper and songwriter Queen Latifah, and acclaimed director James Cameron. Catherine Laga'aia, the star of the live-action adaptation of "Moana", will be recognized as the Breakthrough Star of the Year. □

Super-Bees' in southern California evolve to defeat deadly parasites

In the sprawling canyons and sun-soaked coastal sage scrub of Southern California, a silent revolution is buzzing through the air. While honeybee populations worldwide have faced a harrowing decline due to the "Varroa destructor" mite, a localized strain of resilient bees has been discovered thriving in San Diego and Riverside counties. These "super-bees" have achieved what scientists have spent decades trying to engineer in a lab: a natural, genetic defense against one of nature's most lethal parasites.

The Varroa mite is a beekeeper's worst nightmare. These microscopic red hitchhikers attach to bees, draining their vital fluids and transmitting a cocktail of deadly viruses. For most of the last thirty years,



keeping a hive alive has required a rigorous schedule of chemical treatments. Without human intervention, a typical colony rarely survives more than two years. Yet, researchers recently identified "feral" colonies in Southern California that have survived and flourished without a single drop of pesticide for over two decades.

The power of "VSH"

The secret to their survival is a remarkable evolutionary trait known as Varroa Sen-

sitive Hygiene (VSH). These unique California bees have developed an extraordinary sense of smell that allows them to detect the presence of mites hidden beneath the wax caps of developing larvae. Once a mite is detected, the worker bees act with surgical precision. They uncap the cell and remove the infested larvae, sacrificing a few individuals to save the entire colony. By interrupting the mite's reproductive cycle, the bees keep the parasite

levels low enough to remain harmless. This isn't just a fluke; it is evolution in action, proving that nature often holds the keys to its own restoration.

A sweet victory for agriculture

For the vacationers and residents of the Golden State, this discovery is more than just a scientific curiosity it is a safeguard for the landscape itself. Southern California is famous for its agricultural bounty, from the vast almond groves of the Central Valley to the avocado orchards of Fallbrook. These crops rely almost entirely on honeybees for pollination.

By studying these resilient bees, scientists hope to "back-cross" their genes into commercial honeybee stocks. This could eventually lead to a global population of bees that

no longer require chemical assistance, ensuring that the fruits, nuts, and vegetables we enjoy on our holiday tables remain abundant and affordable.

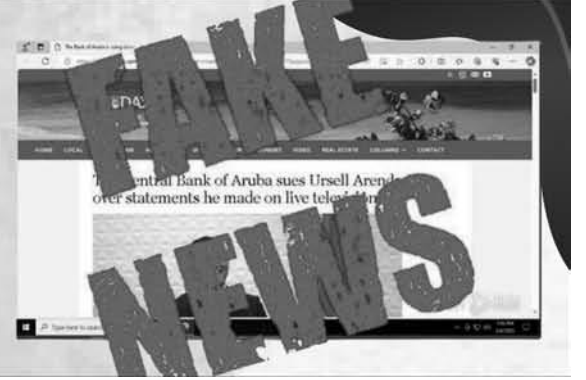
Nature's resilience on display

Beyond the economic impact, the success of these bees is an inspirational reminder of ecological resilience. In an era often defined by environmental struggle, the "Super-Bees of SoCal" stand as a symbol of hope. They remind us that when given enough space and a healthy habitat, life finds a way to adapt and overcome. As these tiny warriors continue to forage among the California poppies and white sage, they are doing more than just making honey. They are providing a blueprint for survival and a reason for optimism. □

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A man walk past finished aso-oke, a handwoven fabric indigenous to the Yoruba ethnic group, in Oke Oja in Iseyin on March 17, 2026.

Nigeria's in vogue handwoven fabric makers resist automation

Iseyin, Nigeria

In Iseyin, a sleepy town in southwestern Nigeria, shaded spaces under trees, makeshift sheds and narrow alleys double as production hubs for aso-oke, a handwoven fabric indigenous to the Yoruba ethnic group.

Demand for the fabric has recently soared at home and abroad, boosted by Nigerians in the diaspora and the rising global popularity of the country's fashion and music culture.

Yet the artisans making it are resisting mechanisation, insisting that handweaving is what makes it unique.

Located about 200 kilometres (130 miles) from the cultural and fashion centre that is Lagos, Iseyin is considered the home of aso-oke. Under a sweltering sun on a muggy morning, yards of yarn and freshly woven fabrics stretch and tangle across a dusty space, surrounded by weathered

sheds where weavers labour behind wooden looms.

Young people, including university graduates, flock to Iseyin to learn a craft that has become an economic lifeline for many.

Bare-chested, his tattooed biceps glistening, Francisco Waliu sat at his wooden loom, its steady click-clack filling the air as he wove a cream-and-blue fabric.

A decade ago, Waliu ditched his career as a singer in Lagos nightclubs to learn aso-oke weaving. He admits he initially struggled with the physical demands of weaving but doesn't regret his move.

"Now I earn a decent living from weaving aso-oke and I'm satisfied," the 34-year-old told AFP.

- Old looms, new generations -

Aso-oke, which loosely translated means "the cloth from up country", is a thick fabric, often vibrantly

multicoloured, which has become a staple in Nigeria, Africa's fashion capital. It is used in traditional ceremonial wear, as well as statement fashion garments and casual wear.

Strips get sewn onto other types of fabric outfits, giving them a touch of colour and class.

Meghan Markle donned an aso oke wrapper and a shoulder shawl during a visit to Nigeria two years ago with her husband, Britain's Prince Harry.

In Iseyin, the steady rhythm of old, wooden looms is the soundtrack to a tradition passed down through generations.

Aso-oke remains both a cultural symbol and a marker of identity.

In the past, production included preparing threads from cotton or silk.

The fibres were cleaned, spun into yarn and dyed, often using traditional methods, before being set out on looms. □



A Tesla vehicle passes the Wilkie D. Ferguson Jr. U.S. Courthouse as jury selection began in connection with allegations regarding the safety of Tesla's autopilot system on July 14, 2025 in Miami, Florida.

In Europe first, Netherlands to allow Teslas to self-drive

The Hague, Netherlands

In a first for Europe, the Netherlands is poised to allow Tesla owners to use their car's self-driving feature as long as they are in the vehicle and keeping a watchful eye over it.

The country's RDW agency for roadworthiness certifications said in a statement late Friday: "Thanks to the type approval, the driver assistance system can now be used in the Netherlands, with possible future expansion to all member states of the European Union."

The move aligns the Netherlands with what is allowed in the United States, where Tesla owners can already use the Full Self-Driving (Supervised) (FSD Supervised) function in the cars.

That mode hands over driving to the Tesla's computer system, including steering, braking, route navigation and parking, all under the active supervision of the driver, who remains at the controls ready to take over if needed.

The European subsidiary of Tesla, the electric-vehicle company run by the world's richest person, Elon Musk, hailed the Netherlands' move.

"FSD Supervised has been approved in the Netherlands & will begin rolling out in the country shortly!" it said on X.

"No other vehicle can do this. We're excited to bring FSD Supervised to more European countries soon."

The Dutch RDW agency stressed the difference between FSD Supervised, with a human remaining at the controls, and full autonomous driving.

"A vehicle with FSD Supervised is not self-driving. It is a driver assistance system, and the driver remains responsible and must always maintain control," it said.

RDW's decision has to go to the European Commission for authorization, so that its national certification has EU weight.

Tesla sales have been facing headwinds in Europe including in the Netherlands in the last couple of years. □

'No fun': French hospital confronts laughing gas abuse

Bron, France

A 21-year-old man scrolls through Snapchat ads on his phone promoting nitrous oxide, a sedative gas increasingly used by young people in France to get high.

"Honestly, in France it's way too easy to get hold of," he said.

The young man, who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity due to stigma surrounding drug use, said he "got hooked" on the colourless and odourless substance commonly known as laughing gas when he tried it in 2021.

"I was doing it every day, every evening," he said in Bron, just outside the south-eastern city of Lyon.

"After two or three years of using, I told myself I needed to get help, because of the after-effects."

The Lyon resident, who has complained of muscle weakness, is a patient at the Hospices Civils de Lyon (HCL), one of France's leading university hospitals. The hospital is home to France's pioneering teleconsultation programme which is helping healthcare providers to better under-



French Interior Minister Laurent Nunez speaks during a press conference at the police station of Marseille's 2nd arrondissement, in Marseille, southeastern France on April 9, 2026.

stand and treat the gas's toxic effects.

Nitrous oxide is used for pain relief in dentistry and medicine, as well as in catering.

In recent years, misuse of the inexpensive gas has become widespread in France among teenagers and young adults, who often use it as a party drug and inhale it via balloons filled from metal canisters.

A 2021 law prohibits the

sale of laughing gas to minors, but it is still legal in France for individual adults to buy the gas.

- 'Complicated to drive' -

Recreational use produces feelings of euphoria, relaxation and dissociation from reality.

But long-term misuse can cause damage to the nervous system, impair cognitive functions, and lead to problems with balance

and reflexes.

Apart from life-threatening health problems, the gas has caused fatal traffic accidents in France in recent years.

Reports of intoxication tripled between 2022 and 2023, according to the interior ministry.

Now the government has launched an awareness campaign, and Interior Minister Laurent Nunez advocates criminalising the in-

appropriate consumption of the gas, which would be punishable by one year in prison and a fine of 3,750 euros.

Doctors at HCL treat former and current users who might be experiencing long-term cognitive and other effects.

One of the users said she sought treatment when she began to worry about experiencing pins and needles in her legs and arms.

"It's becoming very complicated, even just to drive. When it hits me, the tingling it hurts a lot," said the 23-year-old woman, who also spoke on condition of anonymity.

After having been hospitalised for her pain, she went for a follow-up appointment at the HCL.

The woman said the treatment including with B12 vitamin was helping.

"I remember more things the B12 really helps me a lot," she said.

Since the service was launched in November 2024, addiction specialist Christophe Riou has conducted 150 telemedicine consultations and 60 in-person consultations with patients aged 15 to 31. □

Geisha spectacle in Japan's Kyoto celebrates arrival of spring

Kyoto, Japan

Against a backdrop of blooming cherry blossoms, a group of geishas elegantly shuffle onto a stage in Japan's Kyoto city to begin a centuries-old performance celebrating the arrival of spring.

Dressed in sky blue kimonos emblazoned with flowers, the dancers twist and twirl in unison in front of hundreds of spectators eager to see the annual "Miyako Odori" in the nation's spectacular ancient capital.

Geishas, known as geikos in Kyoto, and apprentices called maikos have been donning elaborate costumes and fluttering fans since the Miyako Odori or "capital city dance" first started in 1872.

"Just as cherry blossoms bloom when spring ap-

proaches, the Miyako Odori is a spring tradition in Kyoto," Kyoko Sugiura, head of the Yasaka Nyokoba Gakuen, a school for geishas in Kyoto's Gion district, told AFP.

In Japanese, the word geisha means "person of the

arts", and can refer to a woman or man trained in traditional Japanese performing arts.

In the popular imagination geishas are often confused with courtesans but their work as trained masters of

refined old artforms does not involve selling sex.

Their performances are usually small and private, and take place at high-class establishments which operate a no first-time customer policy.

"That's why it is often thought of as a very exclusive world," Sugiura said.

"But the Miyako Odori is a one-hour show in which geisha and maiko have the opportunity to showcase the arts they practise daily," she said.

"Anyone and everyone with a ticket can enjoy the show."

The Miyako Odori began soon after Kyoto hosted Japan's first national expo an effort to revitalise the western city following the relocation of the capital to Tokyo in 1869.

The format of the perfor-

mance has not changed much, Sugiura explained, although the music and dance moves are sometimes switched up.

Maria Superata, a geisha expert who has worked with them as an interpreter, explained that the show "combines all of the traditional performing arts that you can see in Japan".

"For example, elements from kabuki (classical Japanese theatre), elements from traditional dance. So they have to act, they have to sing, they have to play the instruments, everything all in one," she said.

"That's why it's so special." But the number of geishas, who once made a living through performing for Japan's wealthy elite, is in decline. □



Geisha and maiko (apprentice geisha) take part in a rehearsal for the annual "Miyako Odori" -- which means "capital city dance" in Japanese, at the Gion Kobu Kaburenjo in Kyoto on March 31, 2026.

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How Aruban beaches came to be!



(Oranjestad)—We've talked about the best beaches to visit on the island before, but have you ever wondered how Aruba got its white, sandy beaches, and why there's a clear difference between the northern and southern shores? Here are some fun facts about the development of Aruban beaches. How did Aruba get its white, sandy beaches?

Aruba's beaches have developed over the span of thousands of years. Waves crashing on the rocky formations along our coast line (which consists mainly of coral reefs) have started to wear and tear the reefs over time, resulting in its gradual breakdown. Fish that feed off corals also contribute to this—one small bite at a time. Over the course of thousands of years, as waves continue to crash and fish continue to eat off the corals, sand starts to accumulate around the area. However, whether the sand stays there is another question to be answered, and this is where we highlight the biggest difference between the northern and southern coast of the island.

The sand that accumulates around a torn coral reef is swept away along with the debris by the ocean stream. However, in areas where it's shallow and the stream is weaker, the sand tends to stick to the bottom faster. This is why the beaches in the south—the areas with weaker stream and shallower ocean floors—has sand that stretches for miles. In contrast, the northern area, where the stream is much stronger and the ocean floor is much deeper, there is no sand present—they were swept away with the current!

Why is the north deep, but the south shallow?

Aruba is a continental island. The island actually forms part of South America, and the space between Aruba and the South American continent is simply referred to as land that runs under the ocean. This is why it gets gradually deeper in the south, whereas the ocean floor in the north runs steeply to the bottom.

Source: archival document provided by the National Archive of Aruba (ANA). □



Fun facts about the 'Lisinbein'

The 'Lisinbein' (*Scolopendra gigantea*), also known as the Giant Centipede, is one of the largest centipedes in the world and is found in Aruba. Its size and hunting prowess make it a fascinating, if often misunderstood, creature.

Despite its fearsome reputation, it plays a crucial ecological role that often goes unnoticed.

As an apex invertebrate predator, *Scolopendra gigantea* helps maintain balance in the ecosystem. Moreover, they themselves are a food source for birds such as the Crested Caracara (Warawara) and the Aruba burrowing owl (Shoco).

It controls populations of smaller invertebrates and even small vertebrates, ensuring that no species overpopulates, which could disrupt local biodiversity. Its presence can indicate a healthy, functioning ecosystem. Its sensitivity to environmental changes makes it a bioindicator of ecological balance.

It can reach an impressive length of up to 30 centimeters (approx. 12 inches) and live for around 5 to 10 years in the wild. Its size and longevity makes it a significant and long-term part of the ecosystem.

A mother's love

In *Scolopendra* species, the 'mother' typically exhibits maternal care by curling around her eggs and newly hatched young. She stays coiled around the clutch, protecting it from predators and fungi, which are serious risks in the moist environments these centipedes often inhabit. The mother maintains a clean



environment for the eggs by carefully grooming them, which helps prevent fungal growth that could endanger the brood. This behavior may continue until the young centipedes have undergone their first molt, making them more capable of independent survival.

This form of parental care is beneficial in increasing the survival rates of offspring, as the mother's protection provides a safe 'environment' during their vulnerable developmental stages. It's a fascinating adaptation because it shows a form of care that resembles more complex behaviors observed in vertebrates.

No bark, but all bite!

The lisinbein is known locally for having a really painful sting. While venomous, the Lisinbein is generally not aggressive toward humans unless provoked. Its role as a guardian of balance in the ecosystem helps protect the natural beauty of Aruba by keeping the ecosystem in harmony. Editor's note: Information and pictures provided by Ms. Natasha Silva from the Aruba Conservation Foundation. □

Discover the Best of Paseo Herencia



Shopping

Paseo Herencia invites you to shop at an easy island pace in a charming open air setting, where international style meets local creativity. Browse fashion, fragrances, footwear, jewelry, skincare, and souvenirs all in one relaxed stroll.

Find well-known brands such as Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, Aldo, Carmen Steffens, and Psycho Bunny, then stop by Pandora to turn Aruba themed charms into keepsakes you can take home. For something truly one of a kind, explore locally handmade gifts and artwork at The Artist Co-op and Olla Gallery, where island inspired pieces and personalized options add a meaningful touch. Lumiere Candles adds to the local charm with Aruba inspired candles, perfect for bringing a little island warmth back home.

For a special accessory, discover permanent jewelry at Gloria Feliciano, crafted locally for everyday wear. For island wellness, Aruba Aloe offers locally made skincare and gifts created with aloe grown right here on the

island. Beauty lovers can visit Maggy's for favorite beauty essentials and services for hair, nails, and makeup, perfect for a quick refresh before dinner or a night out.

A World of Flavors

Dining at Paseo Herencia fits every moment of the day, from breakfast to late night bites. Start at Che Bar, serving breakfast from 7:30 AM and continuing throughout the day with comforting favorites, including classic Neapolitan style pizza.

For bold traditional flavors, Xixon Spanish Restaurant is a go to for signature dishes such as paella paired with a wide wine selection. If you are craving something modern, Fusion Cuisine brings a creative twist with its original take on sushi. The Lazy Turtle offers comforting classics and craveable appetizers, while Sexy Shrimp adds a sports bar atmosphere to the mix, pairing standout drinks with a diverse menu that is perfect for gathering with friends and watching any game.

As the evening continues, follow your cravings. Enjoy Mexican favorites at Iguana Can-



tina, share Dutch specialties at Pomm's Frites, and finish with something sweet at Mythos or Mimo's roll up ice cream. Starbucks is always nearby for a familiar coffee or an easy refresh between stops.

VIP Cinema

Caribbean Cinemas VIP delivers a premium movie experience on the second floor, easily accessible by escalator. Settle into plush reclining seats and enjoy high quality screens, state of the art projection, and immersive sound. A well stocked concessions counter offers classic popcorn, snacks, and drinks including wine, making it ideal for a laid back movie night or a special outing.

Location and Hours

Paseo Herencia is located in Aruba's high rise area, directly across from Holiday Inn. The mall is open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM, and on Sundays from 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM. For the latest updates and upcoming events, follow our social media pages and visit our website at www.paseoherencia.com.

Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations

(Oranjestad)—The Ayo and Casibari Rock Formations are known locally as one of the crucial sites to have in your "off-road" trip itinerary. These naturally formed rock formations as just one of the few places on the island that hold a rich history of our culture and of our ancestors.

Ayo

The Ayo Rock Formation is located in the northern part of the island, right on the road that leads you to the Black Stone Beach, and close to the Natural Bridge. The Ayo is a fenced terrain that consists of several giant boulders, resting neatly on top of or side by side each other, adding gorgeous natural architecture to the surrounding "mondi"*. This is also one of the few sites to contain prehistoric markings of our indigenous ancestors. The Ayo Rock formation contains stairs that lead you to the top of the highest boulder, offering a breath-taking view of the



Aruban backyard. The Ayo is usually quiet, as it is situated farther away from the busier parts of the island. However, this is just another charm of the site: the quiet area and the refreshing breeze offer a sense of comfort and peace.

Casibari

Probably the busier rock formation site, the Casibari is situated more in the center of the island, much closer—and more accessible—to the general public. Just like Ayo, Casibari is a fenced area containing several boulders that lay on top or lean on each other. The best aspect of the Casibari Rock Formation is the accompanying view when you climb up the top of

the round, flat bolder. For this position, you can see the majority of the island and the ocean in the south.

Both sites are open free to the public, 24 hours a day. However, unless you are taking a trip with a professional tour guide, there are no guides at the sites to help you climb the rock. So, do be careful when trudging on the boulders, and make sure to befriend any roaming goats you see along the way!

*Mondi: what we call our Aruban wilderness. We don't have forests, or deserts, but we do have mondi! □



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A.T.A. Replaces Canopies Near Uncle Louis Store Monument

ORANJESTAD – The Aruba Tourism Authority (A.T.A.) continues its ongoing efforts to enhance and maintain key public spaces across the island, ensuring a pleasant and welcoming environment for both visitors and the local community.

Recently, A.T.A. completed the replacement of canopies along Main Street in San Nicolas, an important cultural and commercial hub for Aruba. As part of this project, six existing canopies near the Uncle Louis Store monument were upgraded with new orange-colored structures, in line with the approved design and materials.

The new canopies not only give the area a more modern and cohesive look, but also improve comfort by providing additional shade—an important feature for guests exploring the area.

Main Street in San Nicolas is a popular destination for visitors and serves as a central point where local businesses operate and daily activities take place. Improvements to the infrastructure in this area are essential in creating a safe, organized, and enjoyable atmosphere for residents, business owners, and tourists alike.

These upgrades are part of A.T.A.'s broader plan



to revitalize and maintain key zones throughout Aruba, with a strong focus on quality, safety, and sustainability. A.T.A. remains committed to investing in public spaces to ensure they are functional, visually appealing, and well maintained for everyone to enjoy. □



(Oranjestad)—At the furthest western point of the island, there lies the tallest structure on the island: The California Light House. Standing on top of a limestone cliff, this lighthouse oversees the entire island, offering one of few best views of the island and the surrounding sea. It is also one of the few monuments that hold a rich history.

The lighthouse was constructed in between 1914-1916, and its first keeper was a young trained lighthouse keeper from Curacao names Jacob Jacobs. Mr. Frederico Fingal was the last man to have occupied this position until 1962. Though his son, Mr. Romulo Fingal did not continue in his father's footsteps, he does have a special connection to the lighthouse. He sat down with our reporter and shared a bit of its history.

As Mr. Fingal explains, "In 1915, cargo donkeys were hired from Figaroa di Noord to help build the Lighthouse at Westpunt. The donkeys had to walk along the beach all the way to

A brief history of the California Light House

Westpunt carrying the cargo, poles, cement, and all these things. At that time, it was a difficult task until Aruba got its first truck.

These things reflect how people could have accomplished this tremendous job with so little." Mr. Fingal said, "At that time, it wasn't a place for people to work. It was very challenging because it was full of goats and donkeys, and it was very isolated. There were no hotels or roads to get there. There was only a donkey trail. Those were the only means of transportation."

Mr. Fingal continues, "In 1939, I was born in the lighthouse, and my father was the last lighthouse keeper until he retired in 1962. After that, they removed the power cables all the way to the top. According to the story, we couldn't have the light ourselves because they dismantled it, and after many years, I heard that it is in a train museum in San Nicolas, where we found this very special lens that, when the light shines through it, it reaches 30 kilometers out to sea." Mr. Fingal told our reporter.

The lighthouse has a long and very interesting history. The reason why the lighthouse was built, according to Mr. Fingal, dates back to the day

when the cargo ship S.S. California sank because of the lack of light. In 1913, Aruba made a request to Curacao to build a Lighthouse at Westpunt, and the governor of Curacao responded to Aruba to come back in 1915 with a well-detailed plan. "During the First World War from 1914 to 1918, they had to wait for the light to be transported to Aruba because it was manufactured in France. At that time, there was no electricity, and the light was very interesting because it rotated with a kerosene lamp that planes used; clean kerosene," Mr. Fingal said.

Mr. Fingal discovered something very interesting about the lighthouse after much research was documented in his book 'History of the Lighthouse at Westpunt.' He found many details: "I found out that the height of the lighthouse was due to the absence of electricity. There was also the presence of coral. There is a long steel cable from where the light is, and under the light, at the highest point, there is a hanging weight, a sort of pendulum that swings like that, with a weight that measures about 1 meter by 30 centimeters wide, which is a block of solid iron attached to a cable. When you release it upwards, it comes down, and the weight that comes down pulls it up, gradually.

And while it comes down, the same weight that is descending causes many small wheels to turn in the opposite direction. The Lighthouse rotates from 6 pm in the evening, when the sun sets, until 6 am in the morning. During the entire night, the light shines on the lantern, it goes down 24 meters, and the Lighthouse is 30 meters high. It is designed not to collapse," Mr. Fingal explains.

Mr. Fingal further explains that in one night, the lighthouse rotates 4,320 times and consumes one gallon of kerosene for the whole operation. "At that time, the kerosene was supplied from the Lago refinery. Every day it was brought down, and to start the light again, they had to lift the weight up, so our job as children was to crank it and raise the weight back up in the evening when the light stuck, they would take it down again, and the light stayed down. That's how it worked for a very long time," Mr. Fingal explains.

Thanks to the Monument Fund Aruba, which worked hard and is currently in charge of the Lighthouse, Mr. Fingal is very happy with its preservation, along with all the renovations that have taken place. He hopes that the story of the lighthouse will continue to live on for future generations. □

Cas Floria: The Decorated Houses of Aruba

(Oranjestad)—There may be as many as 200 to 300 houses in Aruba that have beautiful decorations, including curtains, stars, flowers, half-moons, etc., placed on the corners or the upper parts of the house.

These houses can be found everywhere, in nearly every district of Aruba. People always thought that these designs came from an Indigenous culture; possibly, the star design resembled the way it was shown, similar to the "God Sun" of the Indigenous people. However, the history of this decorative system does not go very far back in time.

In his book *Millefiori di Aruba*, Father Nooyen declares that the first house to receive this type of decoration was the home of Mr. Bernardo Eman Croes in Pos Chikito. Julien (Janchi) Christiaans and Gregorio (Goy) Semeleer built this house in 1920 and created the decorations on the upper corners of the house. Other people in Pos Chikito, who saw this beautiful work, also wanted their houses decorated in the same way.

Leoncio (Joonchi) Henricus of Pos Chikito learned the work from Janchi Christiaans and, together with his son Bonifacio (Bonny) Henricus, continued decorating houses in Pos Chikito and Sabana Basora.

Janchi Christiaans, Goy Semeleer, and others from Noord, such as Hilario Christiaans, Victor Tromp, Gerardo Jacobs, and Cornelis Rosa, brought the same



decoration to houses in Noord and Paradera. In 1927, Janchi Christiaans built a house for Julian Tromp in Bugaruy.

This was the first house in Noord to receive this type of decoration. Later, those in Paradera, Santa Cruz, and Savaneta copied the house decorations. They practiced these systems up until 1944.

Even today, the patterns are well preserved and protected, but they are no longer used.

Janchi Christiaans began cutting the patterns out of zinc plates and cardboard. He also had his own creations and systems, while Leoncio and Bonifacio Henricus produced their own fantasies. This is what made these decorations popular: many people could turn their imagination into expressive art.

However, the decoration of houses was not originally Janchi Christiaans's idea.

Janchi was a disciple of his father, Hose Christiaans, and of the Donati family, from Italian ancestors. They also made these decorations, though without using any patterns, simply designing and applying them with common plaster as the material.

Using Dr. Johan Hartog's *Aruba, Breve Historia* as reference, I noticed that he also writes that these designs are not Indigenous symbols, but only decorative fantasies. One point of disagreement is that he wrote that in 1820 someone from Curaçao began this type of decoration in Aruba.

This means that, according to Father Nooyen, who

declared that it began in 1920, it would have actually started 100 years earlier. As part of his research, Ito Tromp also interviewed Mr. Julio Maduro of the Department of Labor at that time, who told him that around 1880 Johannes (Janchi) Wolff began with house decorations. And as Janchi himself said, he learned this from his grandfather, who in earlier times had built the first lighthouse at California Point.

After comparing his information, Ito Tromp wrote that Hartog was right concerning the period when decorated houses began in Aruba in 1820. However, it was not people from Curaçao who started it. Victor Tromp, who was 87 years old at the time of writing, was a member of Janchi Wolff's family.

Julio Maduro said that in 1920 they began again with this type of decoration. In general, there is no specific year (up to now) when Arubans first began with this decorative artistic expression. It is interesting to know that these decorations are a kind of symbol for several generations.

For example: Decorations that appear on the house of the Arends family could also be seen on the houses of the Bermudez or Croes

families. This was because parents always gave a specific sign to their sons or daughters when they were getting married.

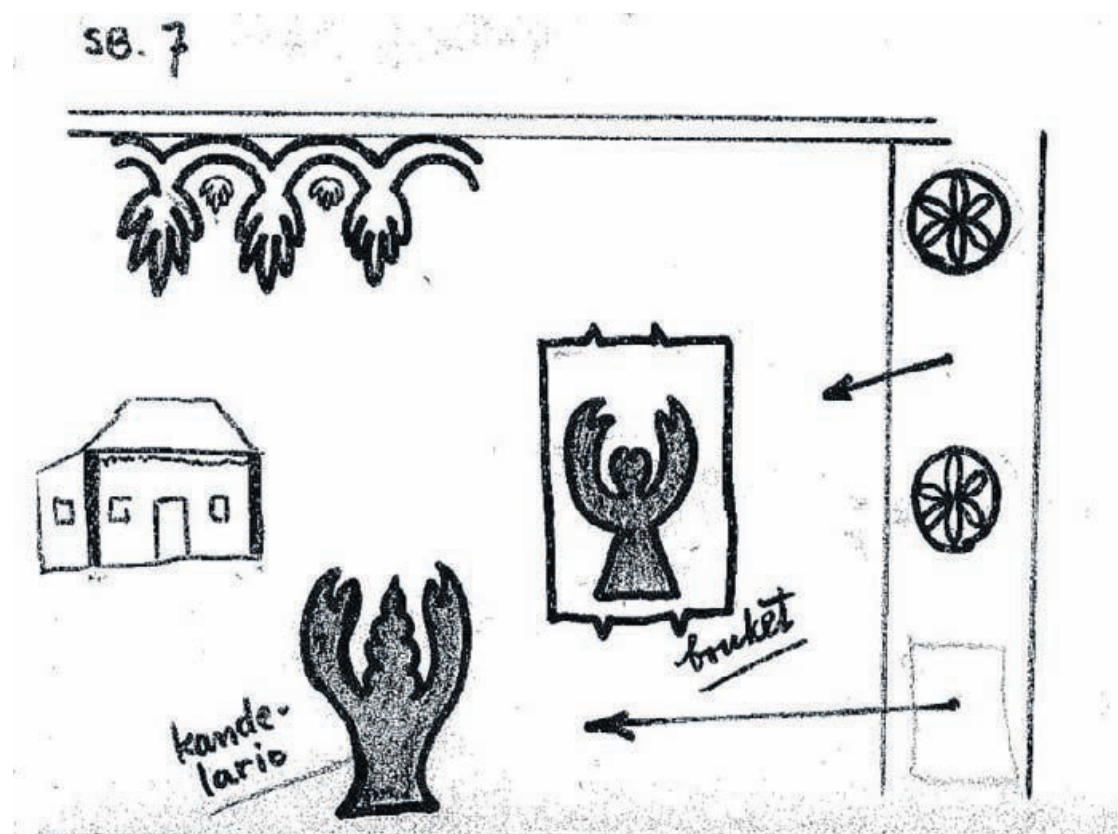
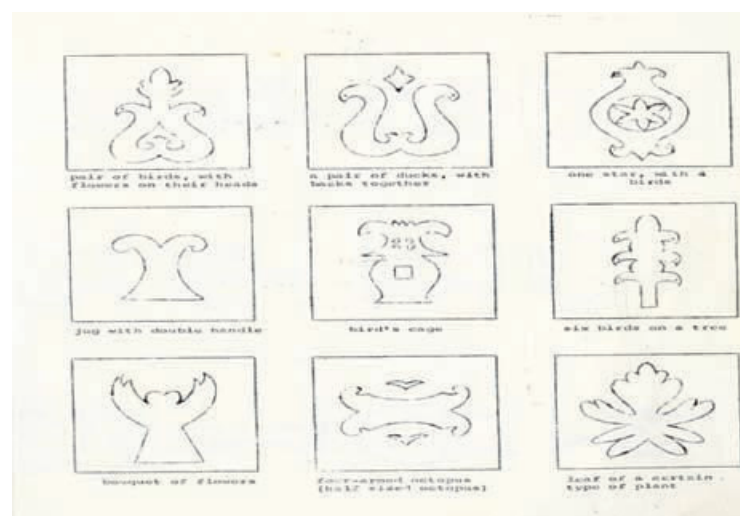
It was also said that these designs had a certain kind of voodoo purpose, to keep away the spirits of the Indigenous people who were buried in the neighborhoods where the houses now stand. However, this has almost completely disappeared.

As for the continuation of these designs from family to family, this is a cultural heritage that is no longer established. For this reason, in earlier times, every young man who married had to have his own house; otherwise, there would be no marriage.

The designs were created according to the individual's imagination. If he saw, for example, six pairs of birds on a tree, he would then paint six pairs of birds on a tree. If he wanted to express his love for his twin children, then he designed a twin.

Nowadays, if you want to use these designs for your house, don't worry—you can simply copy them and paint them. □

Source: E casnan Decora na Aruba (1976) by Ito Tromp



The history and meaning of the Aruban florin

(Oranjestad)—Aruba Today loves to share parts of the Aruban culture with our readers, diving into (historical) facts of Aruba, its culture and way of living. In this article, we'll look at the Aruban florin: its history, design and symbolism.

In Aruba, we know the 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent coins, along with the 1 and 5 Florin coin. Aruban Florin bills include the 10, 25, 50, 100, and rarely, the 200 bills. In Papiamentu we call our currency Florin, but the umbrella term for money is 'placa'. Cents are called 'cen' (pronounced: seng), both in the singular and plural form. Most coins are circular and their size depend on their worth. However, the 50 cent coin is easily recognizable by their square shape, as is the 5 Florin coin by their golden color. Every coin has the Aruban emblem carved on it, with the other side displaying the worth of the coin. The bigger 1 and 5 florin coins, however, contain the carving of the emblem on one side, while displaying the side profile of the Dutch king, Willem-Alexander, on the other side. When his mother, Princess Beatrix, was reigning queen, it was her profile that was carved on the two coins.

Outdated Aruban coins and their names

In the past, Aruban coins had distinctive names and also varied in worth. For example, a 5-cent coin was once called 'Dos Placa'; 10-cent coins were called 'Debchi'; 25-cent coins were called 'Diez Placa'



and the 50-cent coin was once called 'Yotin' (pronounced: jo-teen). We also used a distinctive coins worth 2 ½ cents, called placa too. However, this last coin is no longer in use and has become a relic of Aruban money. Back then, the 5-Florin coin used to also be square, but now it is circular.

Aruban bills: their design and symbolism

The Aruban Florin collection contains a variation of colorful bills, displaying incredibly detailed and beautiful designs that tell the story of Aruba on a single piece of paper.

Prior to 2019, the Aruban Florin bills were relatively simpler in design compared to now, but still included beautiful designs and colors, often depicting local animals. These past designs were made by the Aruban artist Everino Fingal in 1990 up to 2019. Between 1990 and 1993, the 5 Florin coin was a bill. The Fingal designs also included a 500-Florin bill, which has now been discontinued.

In 2019, the Central Bank of Aruba commissioned a new design of the Aruba Florin bills, this time selecting artist and former art teacher, Nigel Matthew, to present his new design. Matthew kept the tradition of including local animals and the familiar colors on the bills. However, he included additional designs that represent the Aruban culture and link to the Indigenous inhabitants that

were the first to set foot on the island.

Current design and symbolism

10 florin

On the 10-florin bill, you can see a Tortuga blanco (white turtle). The blue color symbolizes the blue Caribbean Sea. You can also see the ruins of the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins, a coral motif, and the symbols of Cas Floria (traditional Aruban house design) with a piece of mosaic.

25 florin

On this orange bill, you can see an Aruban medicinal plant called Shoshoro. The birds Trupiaal, Shoco, rock drawings, and the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic are also depicted. There is also a Purun di ceramica (clay pot), in

reference to the relics left behind by our indigenous ancestors.

50 florin

On this bill, we see the Cododo (blue lizard found on the ABC islands), Cangreu di tera (land crab), Willem III Tower, and again the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, as well as a beach plant called Banana di rif. The colors are pink/purple.

100 florin

This bill is green in color, representing nature. Here we see the Yuwana (iguana), Aloe, Toteki (lizard), the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, and a dance group performing the Baile di cinta (folkloric dance with silk ribbons).

200 florin

There is another bill with a value of 200 dollars. The brown color symbolizes the earth of Aruba. Here we see the Dornasol and the Warawara—both local birds, along with the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, the Tuna cactus plant, and the Caha di orgel (folkloric instrument, used for many traditional songs).

Extra fact:

The word "florin" is supposedly named after the Italian city of Florence or it's a reference to the Italian word "florino", both explanations related to historical Italian currencies. □

Source: Placa, placa, placa by the National Library of Aruba (BNA).



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 40 Miniature

1 One of the map
Deadly 41 Pound
Sins part

5 Church 42 Calls for
fixture 43 Low digits

10 Pays to
play

12 "Cheers"
barmaid

13 South
America's
north
coast

15 Bar bill

16 Quaker's
pronoun

17 Not pos.

18 Sand
substance

20 Skin woe

21 Home
design

22 Reduced
amount

23 More than
sufficient

25 Pack tight

28 Salon
jobs

31 On this
spot

32 Hun
leader

34 Swearing-
in vow

35 That guy's

36 Tote

37 Deluge

DOWN

1 Survives

2 Like some
debts

3 Horse
house

4 Wallet bill

5 Needing
aspirin

6 Hurried
flight

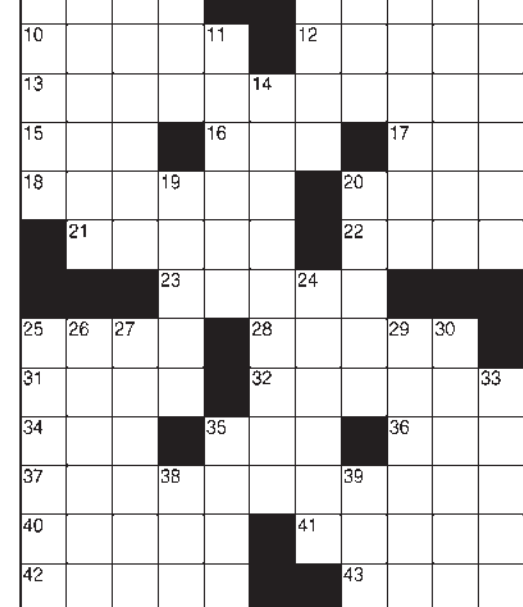
7 Somno-
lent state

8 Sci-fi
threat

25 Contribute

39 Tire track

4-25



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-25 CRYPTOQUOTE

B L N B N Q Y V S B N K S J R H N K

B N B N Y , X L G B L G J Y V H S S .

V L Y V K Y I S J G V Y E Q Y C V .

B L N B N Q Y V S G J J Y Q Y T .

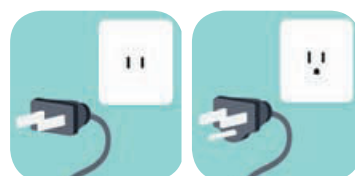
— Y C N C O K N Z J

Cryptoquote: I ASK YOU TO ENSURE
THAT HUMANITY IS SERVED BY WEALTH AND
NOT RULED BY IT. — POPE FRANCIS

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the

Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE	
14 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C NORWEGIAN EPIC Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: I
15 WED	BRILLIANCE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B SERENADE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C FREEWINDS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: **** Berth: E
16 THU	QUEEN ANNE Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: c STAR PRINCESS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 18:00 Berth: I
17 FRI	FREEWINDS [Departure] Arrival: **** Departure: 22:30 Berth: E
19 SUN	GRAND PRINCESS Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: B SCENIC ECLIPSE Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

3	2		5			4		
	4						5	3
1	8	5	4	3	6	2	7	9
8			6	2				
			8				4	2
4		2		5	7			8
	5	8		4			6	
6					9	3	2	
2			1			8	9	

Difficulty: ★★

4/14

Answer to previous puzzle

5	9	4	6	8	7	1	2	3
3	7	8	1	5	2	4	6	9
1	6	2	9	3	4	8	7	5
4	8	7	3	1	9	2	5	6
9	5	3	2	6	8	7	1	4
6	2	1	7	4	5	9	3	8
8	1	9	5	2	6	3	4	7
2	4	5	8	7	3	6	9	1
7	3	6	4	9	1	5	8	2

Difficulty: ★

4/13

Satisfaction as Rolling Stones drop track under Cockroaches name

London, United Kingdom

The Rolling Stones have mysteriously released a new limited edition single on vinyl only, under the band name The Cockroaches, further fueling speculation the British rockers are poised to drop a 25th studio album.

The track called "Rough and Twisted" went on sale Saturday, reportedly in extremely limited numbers in selected independent record stores around the world.

Sounds of the Universe, in London's Soho, was the only place in the British capital to receive the coveted records, which were sold in a plain white sleeve without any reference to the Stones.

The store located in the same building where the legendary band held its first rehearsals got just 14 copies to sell, according to Angela Scott, whose partner owns the record retailer and who was working there Saturday.

The Stones' record label Universal Music "called us on Friday and told us that they had some records for us and could we sell them on Saturday," she told AFP. "They told someone here maybe that it was the Rolling Stones and they're called the Cockroaches," Scott explained.

"They said it was because



(L-R) Ronnie Wood, Mick Jagger, Steve Jordan and Keith Richards of The Rolling Stones perform onstage at SoFi Stadium on July 13, 2024 in Inglewood, California.

of the building being the Rolling Stones' building that's how we were selected."

Scott noted the label insisted the record had to be sold for exactly £10.07 (\$13.54).

"They didn't explain but one of the fans in the queue said he reckons that it might be the release date of the album."

The 14 copies in London sold out instantly, after some fans got wind of the release and queued up in advance.

"One of the guys had queued from three o'clock in the morning," noted Scott, even though the store does not open until 10 am on Saturday.

- '64 & counting' -

The first 14 in line had "all finished buying them by five past 10" but one was

willing to play the new track in-store.

"All of the people that queued were all able to hear it and that was a moment for them. They loved it. They were all very happy," she recounted.

"Then we had to put a sign up that said 'Cockroaches sold out', because obviously everyone was turning up and disappointed." □



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Home where young Bowie dreamt of 'fame' to open to public

Bromley, United Kingdom

With its grey front door and battered picket fence, No. 4 Plaistow Grove in the anonymous London suburb of Bromley is unremarkable in every way except for one.

The modest terraced house originally built as a railway workers' cottage in the late 19th century is the childhood home of pop phenomenon David Bowie.

An inscription on a small blue plaque to the right of the front door is the only clue to the property's extraordinary past.

"David Bowie Singer and Talented Musician 1955-1968," it reads, a reference to the 13 years that he spent living there.

Bowie, one of the most influential artists of the 20th century who died aged 69 in 2016, spent some of his most formative years here. Now, the house has been acquired by a leading London heritage body which plans to turn it into a Bowie immersive experience.

Under the curatorship of Bowie expert Geoff Marsh it would be returned to the way it would have been when he was 16 in 1963 and opened to the public hopefully by the end of 2027.

The singer, real name David Jones, and his family moved into the property on the southeastern outskirts of the capital in 1955 when he was eight years old.



The former home of British singer David Bowie (C) is pictured in Bromley, south east of London, on March 11, 2026.

"It all started in this building," Marsh told AFP. "It was here that he changed from being an ordinary schoolboy to being determined to be a superstar."

- Step back in time -

Bowie lived in the house with his parents, Haywood and Peggy, and older half brother, Terry, a major creative influence who introduced him to modern jazz, Beat literature and Buddhism.

From 1966 onwards, however, Terry was no longer a constant presence at home due to a schizophrenia diagnosis which saw him in and out of psychiat-

ric hospitals.

According to biographers, Peggy was emotionally distant towards Bowie, and their relationship included periods of estrangement. Peggy moved out in 1970 following the death at home a year earlier of Haywood, aged just 56.

Once restored, people will be able to take a step back in time and experience the young Bowie's world, just as Beatles fans have done in Liverpool at the childhood homes of John Lennon and Paul McCartney.

Out will go the central heating, modern kitchen-diner extension and conservatory, plus the upstairs

bathroom.

Back in will be a coal fire, outside lavatory, tiny kitchen and garage that once stood at the end of the garden.

It is located a stone's throw from the Sundridge Park railway station, from where Bowie "could get from what he saw as being very dull suburban life... straight into the West End, Soho, the music clubs there", Marsh said.

- Place to dream -

"It was that kind of culture in the 50s: keep your head down. Know who you are. Don't try and get above yourself," said Marsh, who

curated the David Bowie Is exhibition at London's V&A museum in 2013.

"And David obviously just thought 'that's not for me. I want to be a success'. And music was his way out."

The main focal point will be the small 2.7 metre by three metre (9ft by 10ft) back bedroom where Bowie's creative journey began.

Bowie wrote his earliest songs here but struggled with rejection for five years before achieving his first major hit with "Space Oddity" in 1969.

In later life, Bowie described the bedroom as a place where he went to escape from his parents and dream.

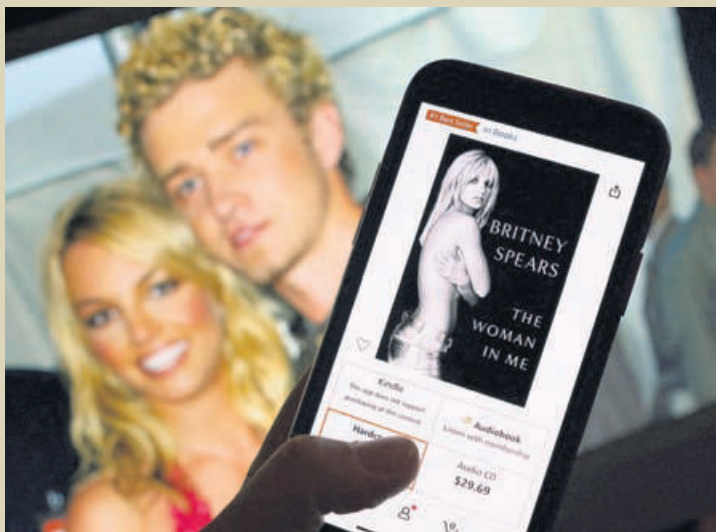
But the singer, whose career was marked by a commitment to constant reinvention, also voiced a sense that the room had followed him around all his life, Marsh said.

He was "always, to some extent, running away from here", he added.

Heritage of London Trust director Nicola Stacey said she expected fans to find there was "nothing more powerful" than standing in the room.

Bowie had a record player and a tape recorder there as well as a saxophone bought for him by his father, who is said to have been more emotionally supportive. □

Britney Spears checks into rehab following DUI arrest: media



This illustration image taken on October 21, 2023 shows the cover of Britney Spears' book "The Woman in Me" from an online retailer in front of a picture of Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake at the American Music Awards from January 9, 2002.

Los Angeles, United States

U.S. pop superstar Britney Spears has checked herself into rehab following her arrest last month on suspicion of driving while intoxicated near Los Angeles, US media reported on Sunday.

The 44-year-old singer was arrested in early March and booked into custody by the Ventura County Sheriff's Department on suspicion of DUI.

She was released soon after, and a representative for Spears at the time described the incident as "completely inexcusable" and said Spears would "take the right steps and comply with the law," according to the entertainment outlet Deadline. On Sunday, multiple U.S. news outlets reported that Spears had voluntarily checked herself into a treatment facility.

It was not immediately clear when Spears

entered the facility. She is scheduled to appear in court for her DUI arrest on May 4, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Spears had phenomenal early music success in the late 1990s with hits like "...Baby One More Time" but has largely stepped back from music in recent years.

In her 2023 memoir "The Woman in Me," Spears insisted she never did hard drugs and that she did not have a drinking problem, but she admitted that she was taking Adderall, the ADHD medication.

Following a public breakdown in 2007, Spears was placed under the conservatorship of her father Jamie Spears, who controlled her money and her personal life, even as she continued to perform high-profile concerts.

The conservatorship was dissolved by a Los Angeles court in 2021, after a groundswell of public support to "Free Britney." □

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What next for Pogacar, Van der Poel after Roubaix blow?

Paris, France

Tadej Pogacar may have missed out on a historic Paris-Roubaix triumph but the world champion can still rewrite the record books this season.

For his great rival Mathieu van der Poel, though, his year seems almost as good as over after missing out on his three main Spring objectives.

Pogacar was aiming to become just the fourth man to win all five Monument races and the first to hold them all at the same time. But he was beaten by a resurgent Wout van Aert in a sprint finish at the famous old Roubaix velodrome on Sunday, putting that bid on hold for a year at least. When asked if he would come back to the 'Hell of the North', Pogacar said: "Yes, definitely. I think I will be back. "Maybe not next year. I still have a few years of my career, I hope. "I will try to come back and give it a go again."



Second-placed UAE Team Emirates XRG's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar reacts at the end of the 123rd edition of the Paris-Roubaix one-day classic cycling race, 258.3 km between Compiègne and Roubaix, at the Vélodrome André-Pétrieux in Roubaix, northern France, on April 12, 2026.

He can still write his name in the record books by becoming the first rider to win four of the five Monuments in a single calendar year. He won Milan-San Remo for the first time last month and a week ago triumphed for a record-equalling third

time at the Tour of Flanders.

The two remaining Monuments are the ones best suited to Pogacar and where his recent domination has been unprecedented.

He has won Liege-Bas-

togne-Liege, which is next up in two weeks' time, three times and finished more than a minute clear in each of the last two editions.

At the Tour of Lombardy, which takes place in October, he has been unbeat-

able, winning on each of the five occasions he has taken part.

Two years ago he finished more than three minutes clear of Olympic champion Remco Evenepoel.

Pogacar's focus this season seems to be squarely on the most prestigious races. He has raced only four times this season and three of those have been Monuments, while the fourth was at Strade Bianche, the unofficial sixth Monument.

After competing at Liege, the 27-year-old Slovenian will begin his build up to the Tour de France by racing for the first time in the tours of Romandie and Switzerland.

Those are two of the seven most historic and high-profile week-long stage races and two of only three that Pogacar has yet to win.

After the Tour, he is likely to finish his season with a tilt at a third world title, a sixth Tour of Lombardy, and probably a second European crown as that race will be in his homeland. □

'Beautiful' battle with Sinner extra motivation: Alcaraz

Barcelona, Spain

Spanish tennis star Carlos Alcaraz said Monday his battle with new world number one Jannik Sinner was giving him extra inspiration ahead of the Barcelona Open.

Sinner defeated Alcaraz in the final at the Monte Carlo Masters on Sunday to usurp him at the top of the world rankings. Alcaraz can claim back the spot with victory in Barcelona this week, where he finished runner-up last year.

"I think the battle for number one that Jannik and I are having is a very beauti-

ful one, and I think it's probably an extra motivation," Alcaraz told reporters.

"The truth is that Jannik and I have a very good relationship. Obviously it's not super personal, we don't go out to dinner, we don't go eat together, but I think the relationship we have off court is very good." Alcaraz said the Italian was driving him on to be a better player, although he would "not miss him" this week in Barcelona.

"(He's someone who) makes me better, who makes me aware of my

weaknesses, who makes me realise what I really have to focus on in every practice and every match," said the 22-year-old seven-time Grand Slam winner.

"I try to push myself every day, and that's why it's really nice to have him as a reference point and to see him achieving everything he's achieving."

Alcaraz said he was happy to see Sinner taking "giant steps forward" on clay and that they were very even on every surface.

"When we face each other, between him and me



Italy's Jannik Sinner (L) and Spain's Carlos Alcaraz celebrate on the podium following their Monte Carlo ATP Masters Series Tournament final tennis match on Court Rainier III at the Monte-Carlo Country Club in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, south-eastern France on April 12, 2026.

there isn't really a favourite, it doesn't matter if we play on grass, on hard court or on clay," he added.

The Spaniard has won the

Barcelona Open twice, in 2022 and 2023, and takes on Finnish player Otto Virtanen on Tuesday in the round of 32. □





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Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland holds the trophy wearing his Green Jacket with his caddy Harry Diamond at the presentation after the final round of the 2026 Masters Tournament at Augusta National Golf Club on April 12, 2026 in Augusta, Georgia.

McIlroy wins second Masters in a row for sixth major title

Augusta, United States

Rory McIlroy overcame early stumbles and a late scare to win the Masters on Sunday, capturing his sixth major title to become only the fourth back-to-back champion at Augusta National.

The world number two from Northern Ireland made a double bogey at the fourth and a bogey at the sixth, but responded with four birdies in the next seven holes and hung on after woeful late tee shots to win a second green jacket and a record top prize of \$4.5 million.

McIlroy joined Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus and Nick Faldo as the only back-to-back winners in Masters history, firing a final round one-under-par 71 to finish on 12-under-par 276 and defeat top-ranked Scottie Scheffler by one stroke.

A year after winning his first Masters to complete a career Grand Slam and snap a 10-year major win drought, McIlroy pulled off a wire-to-wire triumph.

"I just can't believe I waited 17 years to get one green jacket and you know I get two in a row. It's just sort of the way," McIlroy said.

"I think all of my perseverance at this golf tournament over the years has really started to pay off."

Augusta National chairman Fred Ridley placed the green jacket on McIlroy, a role usually reserved for the prior year's Masters winner.

McIlroy seized a 36-hole Masters record six-stroke lead only to play the weekend at level par.

"It was a tough weekend. I did the bulk of my work on Thursday and Friday," McIlroy said. "But just so, so happy to hang in there and get the job done."

McIlroy, third-from last in driving accuracy for the week, saved par at 15 from the trees but sent his tee shot at the 18th over trees on the right to a spot near the adjacent 10th fairway.

With a victory at risk, McIlroy curled a dramatic approach around the pines and into a greenside bunker, then blasted onto the green to 12 feet and two-putted for bogey to secure the triumph.

"It's nice to have that two-shot cushion instead of the one like I had last year," said McIlroy, who needed a playoff to win in 2025.

McIlroy, 36, yelled with joy and lifted his arms into the air after the triumph. He hugged daughter Poppy and wife Erica after walking off the 18th green where he embraced his parents. □



Milwaukee Bucks head coach Doc Rivers looks on during the second half against the Philadelphia 76ers at Xfinity Mobile Arena on April 12, 2026 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Rivers departing as Bucks coach after disappointing season

Los Angeles, United States

Doc Rivers is departing as head coach of the Milwaukee Bucks after the NBA team concluded its lackluster regular season Sunday, U.S. media reported.

The 64-year-old indicated as much himself after the Bucks concluded a 32-50 losing season.

"I can tell you we're all on the same page," Rivers told a post-game press conference of his future with the team. "We've talked about it, and we want it out pretty quick."

"I just want them to do it, it's better. But I think you guys pretty much know."

The Bucks did not immediately respond to AFP request for comment, but ESPN reported that Rivers was out as coach but could still move to an advisory role with the club.

Rivers himself hinted earlier this month that he might be contemplating retirement, mentioning how much he missed spending time with his grandchildren when asked about his coaching future.

Rivers's stellar resume includes an NBA title with the Boston Celtics in 2008.

Milwaukee won the NBA championship as recently as 2021, when Greek-Nigerian star Giannis Antetokounmpo earned a second consecutive Most Valuable Player Award.

Having failed to build on that success, the Bucks brought in Rivers in 2024 amid predictions his arrival could propel Milwaukee back to the top of the NBA. But after two exits in the first round of the playoffs, the Bucks missed out on post-season basketball entirely this time.

Antetokounmpo struggled with injuries and was linked with a mid-season trade before publicly complaining that the team had not allowed him to play.

There were also reports that Rivers had fallen out with several key players. □